DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 035 478 RC 003 936

AUTHOR	Bertrand, Alvin L.; Beale, Calvin L.
TITLE	The French and Non-French in Rural Louisiana. A Study of the Relevance of Ethnic Factors to Rural Development.
INSTITUTION	Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge. Agricultural Experiment Station.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	Bull-606
PUB DATE	Dec 65
NOTE	22p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.20
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement, Anglo Americans, Bilingualism, *Cultural Factors, *Economic Factors, Educational Attitudes, Employment, Family (Sociological Unit), *French, *Language Role, Negroes, Occupations, Racial Composition, Religious Factors, *Rural Development, Rural Education, Rural Population
IDENTIFIERS	*Louisiana

ABSTRACT

Objectives of the study begun in 1960 were (1) to determine the nature and extent of socioeconomic and attitudinal differences between French and non-French ethnic groups in rural Louisiana, giving particular attention to education, income and employment, migration, levels of living, and social participation and (2) to note implications of the findings for groups interested in rural development. The interview sample comprised 648 households (408 in Evangeline Parish; 240 in Pointe Coupee Parish) reflecting 3 types of communities: (1) where French was the predominant language, (2) where English was the main language, and (3) where French and English were used fairly equally. The general level of education in both parishes was low by modern standards. Household heads who preferred to speak French at home averaged significantly fewer years of school. Employed household heads in the French districts were more likely to be farmers than those in mixed or English areas. Both parishes were low-income areas, and French speakers were most often in the low-income group. The French were preponderantly Roman Catholic; the non-French were largely Protestant. The study showed that the process of assimilation was under way at varying speeds and that the French would respond to programs representing economic and educational opportunity. (CM)

Bulletin No. 606 *December 1965*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ED035478

RECEIVED
JAN 16 1970
NMSU
E.R.I.C.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The French and Non-French in Rural Louisiana

A Study of the Relevance of Ethnic Factors to Rural Development

Alvin L. Bertrand
and
Calvin L. Beale

RC003936

Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
Agricultural Experiment Station

in cooperation with

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Table of Contents

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	5
	Objectives	5
	Procedure of Study	6
II.	THE STUDY SETTING	7
	French and Non-French Division of the Louisiana Population	7
	The Economic Setting of French Louisiana	9
	Description of the Sample Parishes	10
III.	CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF REFERENCE	16
IV.	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATIONS, BY AREA AND LANGUAGE	17
	Area and Language Background	18
	Present Language Used, by Childhood Language Background	19
	Racial Composition of the Sample Population	20
	Age Distribution of the Sample Population	20
	Household Size	21
	Employment and Occupation of the Sample Population	22
	Income of Sample Population	23
	Education of Heads of Households in the Sample Populations	26
	Religious Affiliation	30
V.	FRENCH AND NON-FRENCH DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS	31
	Attitude Toward Farming as a Way to Make a Living	31
	Attitudes Toward Living in Rural Areas	32
	Attitudes Concerning the Amount of Education Needed by Young People Today	33
	Opinion on Whether or Not a Man of French-Speaking Background is Handicapped in Looking for a Job Away from the Area, Where French is Not Spoken	34
	Opinion Regarding Whether or Not the Home Parish Afforded an Opportunity to "Make A Good Living"	35
	Opinion as to Whether or Not French-Speaking and Non-French-Speaking People Get Along Well Together	36
	Feelings About Moving to a Strange Community to Better Their Income	37
	Acquaintance of Respondent with Agricultural Extension Agent	38
	Public Official with Whom Respondent Would Feel More at Ease	38
VI.	SUMMARY	39
	Implications	42

ED035478

List of Tables

1. Childhood Language of Heads of Households, by Sample Area . . 18

2. Percentage Distribution of Husbands and Wives by Number of Parents Who Could Speak French, Pointe Coupee Parish Sample Areas 19

3. Childhood Language of Household Heads of French or Bilingual Background and Present Language Used at Home, by Sample Area 19

4. Frequency of French Usage at Home by Whether or Not Bilingual in Childhood, for Household Heads who Learned French as Children 20

5. Age of Household Heads, by Sample Area 21

6. Size of Household, by Language Background and Use of Household Heads 21

7. Employment and Occupation Status of Household Heads, by Sample Area 22

8. Distribution of Households by Income in 1959, by Sample Area 23

9. Family Income, by Race and by Language Background and Use of Head of Household 24

10. Family Income and Occupation of Household Head, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 25

11. Education of Household Heads, by Age and Language Background and Use 27

12. Education of Household Heads, by Race and by Language Background and Use 29

13. Education and Occupation of Household Heads, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households . . 30

14. Religious Preference of Household Heads, by Language Background and Use 31

15. Respondents' Attitude Toward Farming as an Occupation, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 32

16. Informants' Attitude Toward Living in a Rural Area, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 32

17. Respondents' Opinion Concerning Amount of Education Required by a Boy to be Successful at Work, by Childhood Language Background and Use of Household Head 33

18. Respondents' Opinion Regarding Whether or Not a French Language Background is a Handicap in Looking for a Job Outside the Parish, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 35

19. Respondents' Attitude Toward Their Parish as a Place in which to Make a Good Living, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 35

20. Respondents' Opinion on Degree to Which French and English-Speaking People Get Along with One Another, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 36

21. Respondents' Attitude toward Moving to a Strange Community for Higher Income, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 37

22. Acquaintance of Respondent with Agricultural Extension Agent, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households 38

23. Public Official with Whom Respondents Would Feel More at Ease, by Language Background and Use 39

List of Figures

1. Pointe Coupee Parish, showing sample areas according to linguistic characteristics 11

2. Evangeline Parish, showing sample areas according to linguistic characteristics 12

3. Northeastern end of False River, Pointe Coupee Parish 13

4. Belair Cove area of southeastern part of Evangeline Parish 14

5. Area in the southwestern part of Pointe Coupee Parish, including the hamlet of Lottie 15

6. Hamlet of Turkey Creek in north central part of Evangeline Parish 16

The French and Non-French In Rural Louisiana

A Study of the Relevance of Ethnic Factors To Rural Development

ALVIN L. BERTRAND AND CALVIN L. BEALE

Part I. Introduction

The ethnic diversity in many states of the nation is well known. In fact, there are few states that lack at least one group that is known for its cultural distinctiveness—whether based on ethnic origin alone, or on language and religion in addition. While these so-called cultural islands have been numerous in urban centers, they also occur and persist in rural areas. The presence of ethnic diversity in rural America poses problems for the design and administration of development programs and for research workers concerned with rural areas. For example, questions arise regarding the advisability of using the same techniques for disseminating information and motivating interest in specific projects among one group as compared with another. Anyone familiar with the ethnic groups found in such states as Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas, and New Mexico can appreciate why a certain approach might be quite effective in one part of the state and ineffective in another part. In these particular states the situation is complicated by the persistence of languages other than English.

Objectives

The study here reported was planned to shed knowledge on the persistence of distinctive characteristics and attitudes among the Louisiana French, who comprise one of the major rural ethnic minorities in the nation. Much of rural South Louisiana retains the French language and other cultural traits despite many years of close association with a dominant national culture quite different in nature.

In relation to rural development, the overall objective of the study was to provide information which would assist program planners and community leaders in Louisiana areas characterized by ethnic diversity. It is also hoped that the findings will have suggestive value in other states where sizeable population groups have maintained a degree of cultural and linguistic identity.

The specific objectives were as follows: (1) To determine the nature and extent of the socioeconomic and attitudinal differences between the French and non-French ethnic groups in rural Louisiana, giving particular attention to education, income and employment, migration, levels of living, and social participation, and (2) to note the implications of the findings for various public and private groups interested in the development of rural areas.

Procedure of Study

The objectives of this study presented special methodological problems with respect to sampling and interviewing. After a review of the problem it was decided to interview families living in three types of communities: (1) where French was the predominant language, (2) where English was the predominant language, and (3) where persons of French and English language background were present more or less equally.

Once the question of the type of communities to be studied was settled, the specific sample areas had to be selected. A major requirement was that the groups to be interviewed had experienced essentially the same economic, political, and educational environment, in order to minimize differences not associated with ethnic background. Therefore only those parishes (counties) were considered which had all of the three types of communities within their boundaries. In addition, the focus of the study was to be on parishes of below average income which were in particular need of rural development programs. After consulting with extension service agents and other informed people in various parishes and reviewing ethnic boundary delineations based on earlier field work, Evangeline and Pointe Coupee parishes were selected for the study.

Within each sample parish, the households to be interviewed were selected according to a purposive scheme. In the light of information given by the informed local sources, communities having the above named characteristics were selected and delimited on maps. In each parish, two French, two English, and two mixed communities were so delineated (See Figures 1 and 2). The head of the household or an adult representative of each family in these communities was interviewed.

The questionnaire developed for the study included questions which would determine language spoken or understood, as well as queries regarding attitudes and values, which would give insights into the extent of assimilation of the French into the larger culture. Other questions were designed to give information on socioeconomic status, social participation and levels of living.

It was recognized from the start that interviews in the French communities would be more reliable if French-speaking interviewers were used. Consequently, persons with a speaking knowledge of this language were sent to these particular places.

In June 1960, interviews were completed in 648 households, of which 408 were in Evangeline Parish and 240 in Pointe Coupee Parish. Ethnic background was determined by asking, "What language did you speak in early childhood?" and also by asking whether the parents of household heads and wives spoke French.[1]

[1]Strickly speaking this question yields a cultural affiliation rather than a purely ethnic one, for some white people of non-French origin became fully integrated into the French culture during the settlement period and many Negroes adopted the French language.

In the development of the questionnaire, the questions were phrased with the help of consultants, including local persons as well as professional social scientists. Next, a pretest was conducted and some questions changed before the final version of the schedule was adopted. The survey was publicized through the weekly newspapers and radio stations in each parish. The parish extension agents were helpful in this regard and cooperated fully in publicizing the study and making their offices available as headquarters for interview operations.

Part II. The Study Setting

French and Non-French Division of the Louisiana Population

Probably no other non-English ethnic group in the United States has been more persistent in the preservation of its cultural and linquistic identity than have the French in Louisiana. Two terms have been popularized in connection with the Louisiana French—Creole and Acadian (coloquially, Cajun). In general, the Creole population was made up of descendants of middle and upper class persons who came to Louisiana directly from France and Spain or indirectly by way of the West Indies. The Acadians, strictly speaking, are the descendants of refugees from French Canada, expelled from Nova Scotia by the British in 1755. The above distinctions have had real meaning in Louisiana, especially in the past, but in some instances have been stressed and romanticized somewhat beyond reality.[2] In fact, the rather large immigration of French colonists outside of these two groups is often overlooked.

The area most popularly thought of as the Acadian district is the central part of South Louisiana, west of the Atchafalaya River. However, many Acadians also settled in the Mississippi River parishes between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, to the extent that part of this stretch of the river became known as the Acadian Coast. Others located above Baton Rouge, as far north as the mouth of the Red River. The French settlements of Acadians and other elements in the Louisiana bayou country were characterized by houses lined along the bayous with long narrow farms stretching out behind (Figure 3). But the French also occupied inland prairie areas with dispersed farmsteads laid out on the rectangular American pattern (Figure 4). The Creole population was located largely in New Orleans and in the plantation areas along the Mississippi. Some Creoles migrated to the Red River Valley around Natchitoches.

The French differed in important ways from the Anglo-Americans who poured into Louisiana after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Probably the most basic differences between them and "les Americains" were language and religion. If these had not differed, assimilation of the two major groups would have been much easier. The French were

[2]Recognition of the Acadians as a distinctive element among the French is also characteristic of the Acadians in Canada today. See e.g. "Acadia and the Acadians," by C. Bruce Fergusson, in *Collier's* Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, 1959.

Roman Catholic, whereas a majority of the American settlers were of British Protestant background. The Creole French were generally the more prosperous and better educated of the French classes. They controlled the better plantation lands and, among the French, dominated the trade and commerce of the metropolis of New Orleans. The upper class among the Creoles was viewed as a social elite and quickly gained acceptance among the leaders of the new Anglo-American residents. On the other hand, the Acadians and other French colonists were generally small landholders and much more isolated than the Creoles, both physically and culturally. They placed less importance on education, and eventually abandoned French as a written language. Their values were typically traditional ones, centered in the family, the community, and the church, and they were regarded as rather clannish, not only by the Anglo-Americans, but also by the Creoles.

The distinctions within the French population faded with the passing of time. "Cajun" and "Creole" are now used more as descriptions of attitudes and ways of life than actual identifications of ancestry, for lines of descent have often become mixed or forgotten. Indeed, during the colonial and early American periods the absorptive qualities of the French culture were so great in those districts where the French were in the majoriy that many families of Spanish, German, and other national background became assimilated into it. A sizeable Negro population also was accultured by the Louisiana French—originally through slavery—and developed a French-based dialect of its own.

Over the years, the Frenchness of some sections of South Louisiana was diluted by the large-scale entry of Anglo-Americans and non-French foreign immigrants, especially in the principal cities of New Orleans, Lake Charles, and Baton Rouge. But many of the rural districts have remained relatively unaffected, in particular those farthest distant from the main lines of communication. The latter happen to be the areas where the Acadians settled in largest number.

Formal education was frequently neglected by the South Louisiana French and illiteracy rates remained high until recent times. For example, in many of the French parishes, the proportion of white persons 10 years old and over who were illiterate in both French and English was over 25 percent in 1930. Rates for Negroes were often 40 percent. By contrast, in the English-speaking uplands of the state, illiteracy was seldom more than 15 percent among whites or 25 percent among Negroes.[3] Data are not available to make direct comparisons for later periods.

The only systematic estimate of the total number of Louisiana French was made in connection with the 1940 Census of Population. At that time, a 5 percent sample of the white population was asked to state its "mother tongue," the principal language spoken in the home in early childhood. From the Census results, it was estimated that 296,540 native-white people of French mother tongue lived in Lou-

[3]Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population.* Volume III, Part 1. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1932.

isiana.[4] The total number of persons of French background—regardless of mother tongue—was larger but unknown, for by 1940 there were people of French ancestry who had not been taught the language. The occurrence of French as the mother tongue was most prevalent in rural areas, as evidenced by the fact that 77 percent of the population of French mother tongue was rural. By comparison, only 52 percent of the non-French native white population was rural.

The Acadian French culture has traditionally been noted for its *joie de vivre* and many other attractive aspects. However, it was not well-equipped by tradition or institutions for the rapidly evolving industrial economy of recent decades, which places greater emphasis on formal training and impersonal relationships.

The Economic Setting of French Louisiana

The rural areas of South Louisiana entered the Twentieth Century with an economy based principally on agriculture, plus some trapping and fishing. Most of the farmers operated on a decidedly small-scale basis, and lived modestly with a minimum amount of cash expenditures. A number of sugar cane plantations and other large farms were exceptions. In the last half-century, changes have come rapidly. Sugar cane has become increasingly concentrated on large plantations and has greatly diminished as a family-farm crop. The number of cotton farms has also declined, just as it has throughout the South. Commercial sweet potato production is important but generally only as a secondary enterprise. Rice farming has transformed some sections of South Louisiana, but rice is typically a large-scale crop requiring more land and capital than most of the French farmers had. Trapping occupied some of the French in earlier years but has had its economic problems, what with competition from synthetic fibers, the closing of trapping areas, and isolation. It is not regarded as an attractive way of life.

Agriculture today provides far fewer jobs than are sufficient for the typically large families living in the rural areas. However, certain parishes have benefited from the discovery and development of extensive oil and gas fields, especially in the last 20 years. This industry has brought a number of well-paid jobs, and land owners have received considerable royalty income. The discovery of oil has also attracted many outsiders into heretofore rather isolated parishes.

Along the Mississippi River, industrialization is transforming the socioeconomic scene, especially in those parishes where aluminum and petro-chemical plants have been established. Furthermore, the building of good roads has made commuting to the oil fields, plant sites, and cities possible for many rural residents. It should be noted however, that these developments, which have been somewhat fortuitous, have not been evenly distributed in South Louisiana. Some French parishes con-

[4]Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population. Mother Tongue,* 1943.

tinue to be characterized by low incomes, lack of economic growth, and a consequent high rate of out-migration of young people.

Inadequate economic growth has been particularly troublesome in the northern part of French Louisiana. This section lies outside the principal oil fields and beyond the head of ocean navigation on the Mississippi. Four contiguous parishes especially stand out in this connection—Avoyelles, Evangeline, Pointe Coupee, and St. Landry. None of this group grew in population by more than 4 percent from 1950 to 1960, compared with a state growth of 21 percent, and in none was the average family income higher than $2,500 in 1959, compared with a state average of $4,300 and a U.S. average of $5,660. A net of over 38,000 people moved away from the four parishes in the 1950's, the majority of them young people.[5] Two of these parishes, Evangeline and Pointe Coupee, were selected for study.

Description of the Sample Parishes

A description of the study parishes is included here to help the reader visualize the setting. Their geographical location and the sample areas selected in each are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Both parishes are located in the northern part of the area generally recognized as French South Louisiana, but both include sizeable populations of non-French background. Pointe Coupee Parish fronts on the west bank of the Mississippi River, with its southeastern corner being about 15 miles above and across from Baton Rouge. Evangeline Parish lies due west of Pointe Coupee, but is separated from it by an intervening parish, and is not on any major stream. The sample parishes are about 25 miles apart at their closest points.

There is a contrast in the settlement patterns of the two parishes. Pointe Coupee has much poorly-drained uninhabited land and the population is largely located on ribbons of well-drained land bordering the Mississippi River and other streams or along several major highways that cross the parish (See Figures 3 and 5). The "line villages" are typical of the Louisiana bayou country with long, narrow farm fields extending back from the river or bayou.

Evangeline Parish is beyond the flood plain of the Mississippi River and is different in its physical character. The southern half of the parish is level and thickly settled, with dispersed farmsteads. Most of the land there has been cleared or was prairie to begin with and is divided into the rectangular land divisions typically associated with the Middle West. However, the northern half of Evangeline is heavily wooded, far less fertile, and not so flat. There most residences are on narrow cleared strips bordering the main roads or on occasional small prairies (See Figures 2 and 6).

The population of Pointe Coupee was 22,483 in 1960, while that of Evangeline numbered 21,639 persons. The level of population in both was

[5]Bureau of the Census. *U.S. Census of Population: 1960.* Final Reports PC (1) —20A, PC (1) —1C, and PC (1) —20C. Government Printing Offie. Washington, 1961 and 1962.

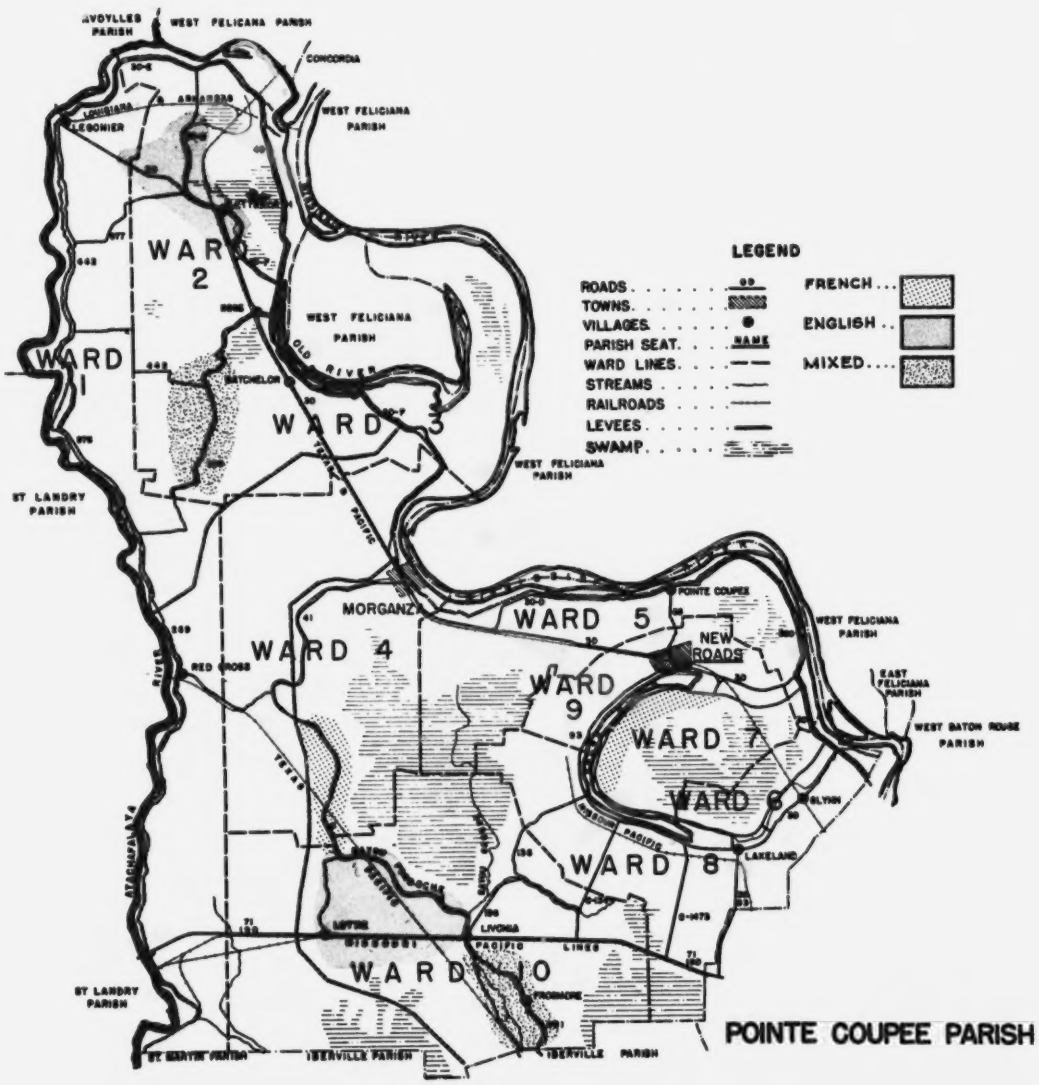

FIGURE 1.—Pointe Coupee Parish, showing sample areas according to linguistic characteristics.

nearly stationary in the 1950's, as Pointe Coupee increased by only 3 percent and Evangeline had a net gain of less than .1 of 1 percent. There was a substantial surplus of births over deaths, but this natural increase was almost entirely offset by outmovement of people to other areas. The lack of growth contrasted sharply with the 21 percent increase in population shown by the state as a whole, but both parishes fared better than many rural areas in North Louisiana, where population declines occurred.

The two sample parishes are very rural in character. Only a sixth of the people of Pointe Coupee Parish and a third of those in Evangeline Parish lived in urban towns in 1960. By contrast, five-eighths of the state population was urban at this time. In both parishes agriculture was

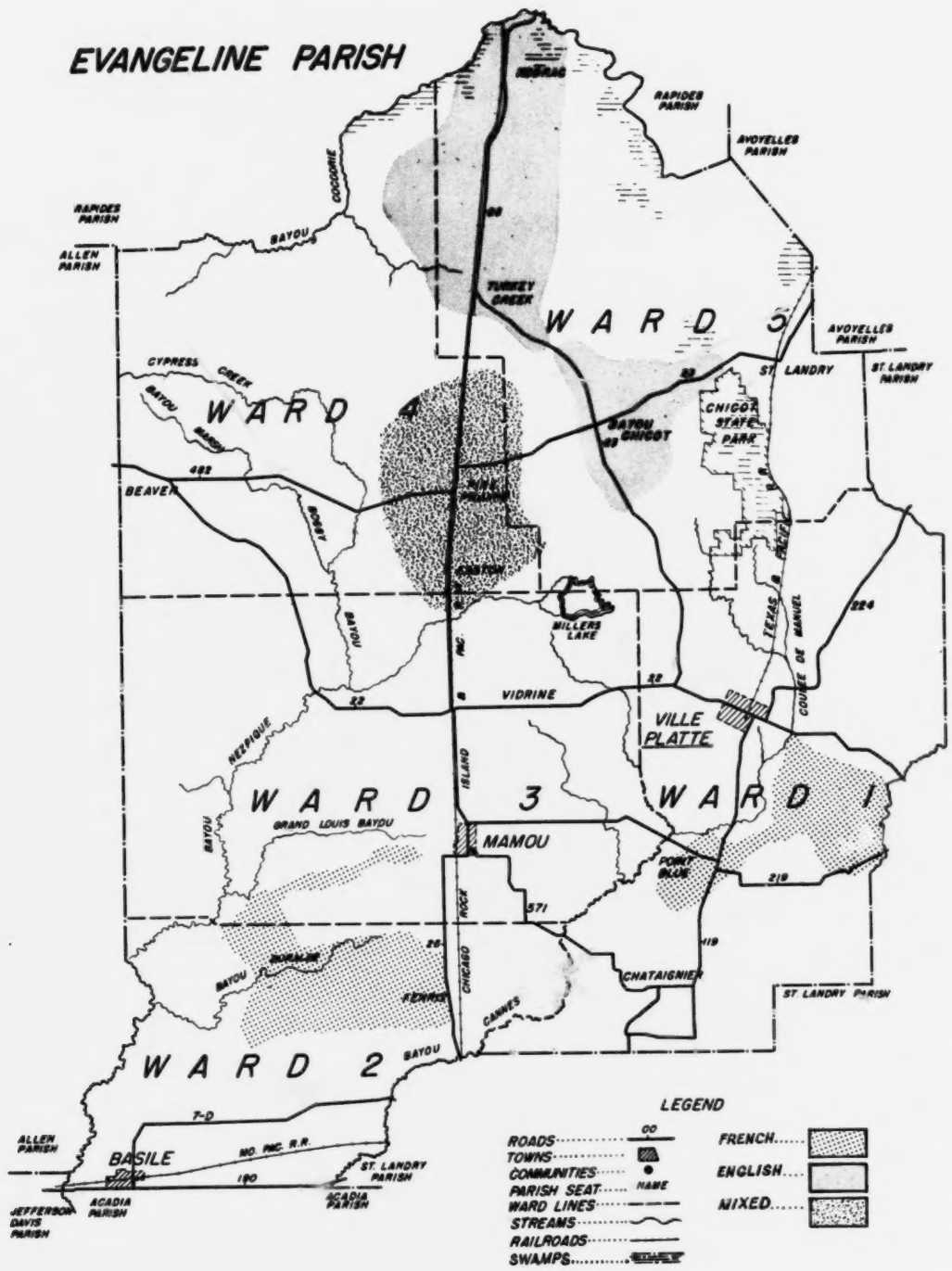

FIGURE 2.—Evangeline Parish, showing sample areas according to linguistic characteristics.

by far the largest source of work, whereas in the state as a whole manufacturing was the largest.

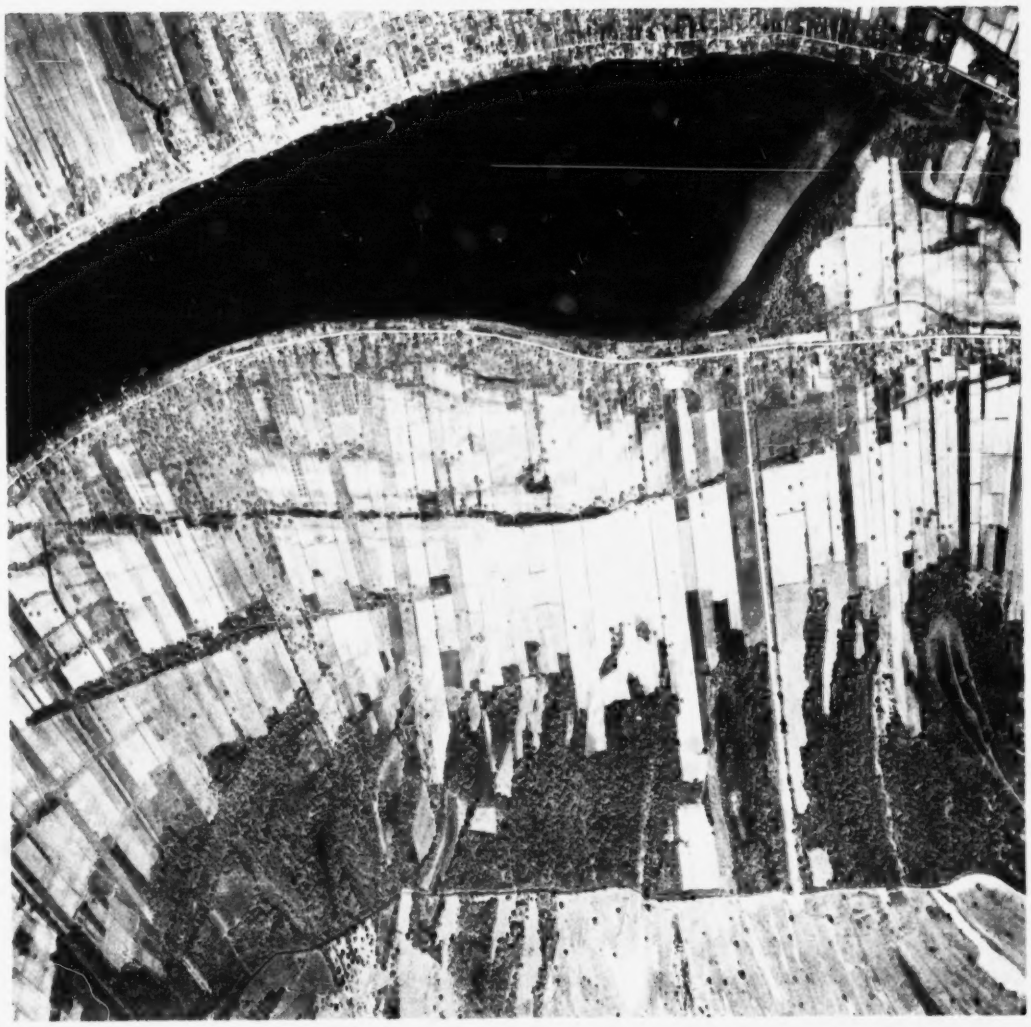

FIGURE 3.—Northeastern end of False River, an old channel of the Mississippi River in Pointe Coupee Parish. Town of New Roads is on the northern shore. South shore shows the typical long narrow French-Style farms, with all houses along the river front in a line village.

Evangeline and Pointe Coupee parishes vary substantially in racial composition. In the former, 27 percent of the inhabitants were nonwhite in 1960. But, in Pointe Coupee Parish, which has more of a plantation background, 54 percent were nonwhite. Nearly all of the nonwhite residents are Negroes.

Both parishes fall well below the state median in educational level of the adult population 25 years of age or older. The median years of school completed by this age group was 6.2 years in Pointe Coupee Parish and 6.0 years in Evangeline, compared with 8.8 years for the state as a whole.

Pointe Coupee Parish had 1,229 farms in 1959, with an average size of 180 acres. Evangeline had more farms, 2,706, but they were considerably smaller, averaging 80 acres. However, the size difference is

FIGURE 4.—Belair Cove area of southeastern part of Evangeline Parish. Note dispersed homestead pattern of small farms with most all of the land in cultivation. Population is almost exclusively French.

mostly in woodland rather than cropland. Average size of all Louisiana farms was 139 acres. The proportion of farmers who were tenants was rather high in both Pointe Coupee (42 percent) and Evangeline (43 percent) in 1959. Only 25 percent of all farms in the state were tenant-operated at this time.

Farming in both parishes is characterized by an unusual feature in that the most valuable crop produced in each is grown only by a small minority of the farmers. In Pointe Coupee this crop is sugar cane and in Evangeline it is rice. These crops—which are highly mechanized and which require substantial capital and land to produce under modern methods—are practically limited to large and medium-scale farms. Most farmers are small-scale operators, however, and by far the most common cash crop for them is cotton, supplemented in Evangeline by sweet potatoes. The majority of the cotton allotments are less than 10 acres. Although production of cattle has also greatly increased in recent

FIGURE 5.—Area in the southwestern part of Pointe Coupee Parish, including the hamlet of Lottie. The French arrangement of farms is not as evident. The pattern of settlement is more dispersed and not along a stream. Sweeping around the area photographed is a protective levee. West of the levee in the lower left of the photo is uncleared, poorly drained woodland, typical of much of the parish.

years to bolster farm income, three-fourths of the commercial farmers in both parishes sell less than $5,000 worth of all farm products annually.

Present employment opportunities in basic industries outside of agriculture are limited. Manufacturing engages only 8 percent of the workers in Evangeline and 11 percent in Pointe Coupee, typically in cutting timber and making wood products. Evangeline has some employment in a modest oil and gas field and parts of Pointe Coupee lie close enough to Baton Rouge to permit commuting to jobs there. Workers are leaving farming, especially young people, but with the relative lack of other jobs, the total number of employed people in the two parishes dropped by 15 percent between 1950 and 1960. Under these conditions, the general level of living of rural families in the sample parishes is

FIGURE 6.—Hamlet of Turkey Creek in north central part of Evangeline Parish. Note the generally wooded and uncultivated nature of this section. Houses are mostly along the main road. Population is Anglo-Saxon.

not good by national standards. For example, only half or less of the rural families had their homes equipped with hot and cold running water, flush toilets, or telephones in 1960. Improvements have been coming rapidly, however.

Part III. Conceptual Frame of Reference

The sociological frame of reference utilized in the analysis of the data collected may be briefly outlined as follows. Whenever and wherever two distinct cultural groups come into contact, one with the other, processes of social adjustment take place.

The problem under study is the degree to which one ethnic group, the rural Louisianians of French cultural background, have become assimilated into the larger culture. This problem has practical relevance

in terms of the implementation of economic development and other programs.

Since the research focus of this study is on the process of assimilation, a definition is in order. Assimilation may be defined as the process by which groups once dissimilar become engulfed in common activity and a sense of separate identity disappears. When complete assimilation has taken place, the groups are merged for all pratical purposes.

Assimilation is often a slow process. It is based on the need for mutual acceptance on the part of the divergent groups. Frequently it is delayed because either the receiving or the incoming group erects barriers to social participation. When such social exclusion is practiced, then assimilation is slowed to that extent. Sometimes one or the other group exhibits physical or social traits which are not attractive to the second group, and assimilation never occurs. There are many examples in the United States where complete assimilation of immigrant or ethnic minority groups has still not come about.

It is common to refer to degrees of assimilation. For illustration the assimilation of the Irish has been much more complete and is now much more advanced than say the assimilation of the Spanish-speaking groups of the Southwest. Previous studies make it clear that in the United States the adoption of English by non-English speaking immigrants is an important indication that assimilation is underway.[6] Those groups which have not adopted English certainly are never completely assimilated.

One of the largest groups in America which has not adopted English exclusively is the French of South Louisiana. The current study takes on additional significance because of this fact.

Part IV. Characteristics of the Populations, by Area and Language

This part of the report presents information on the characteristics of the population studied, focusing on the heads of households. Comparison of the characteristics of the people provides information on the differences existing between the groups and gives insights into the state of assimilation of the French into the larger culture.

Some of the data are shown by sample areas within each parish. In addition, much of the material was tabulated for the combined areas by the present language usage of the head. This affords more direct comparisons between those of French vs. English background, and also between persons who continue to use French predominantly compared with those who had French as a childhood language but now use it less than English.

---

[6]Bertrand, Alvin L., *et. al., Rural Sociology,* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1958, p. 329.

Area and Language Background

The distribution of households heads included in the study by childhood language is shown in Table 1 for each sample area. It will be readily seen that the sample areas in Evangeline Parish came much closer to matching their intended classification than did those in Pointe Coupee Parish. In Pointe Coupee, hardly more than half of the household heads in "French" areas reported French or both French and English as their childhood language. Furthermore, the "Mixed" communities in this parish showed an overwhelming proportion of individuals with English as their childhood language, even to a greater extent than found in the "English" area.

This distribution was surprising to the authors in view of the fact that their consultants within the parish were familiar with the ethnic background of the local communities that had been selected as survey areas. The answer to the riddle was found in the fact that many of the

TABLE 1.—Childhood Language of Heads of Households, by Sample Area

Sample area	Total		French only		French and English		English only	
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Pointe Coupee								
French area	66	100	19	29	17	26	30	45
Mixed area	106	100	3	3	10	9	93	88
English area	68	100	10	15	7	10	51	75
Evangeline								
French	159	100	137	86	14	9	8	5
Mixed area	66	100	26	39	9	14	31	47
English area	183	100	48	26	1	1	134	73

present generation adults of French stock in Pointe Coupee were not taught the French language although their parents could speak this language. Thus, Pointe Coupee Parish proved to be in a more advanced state of change from French to English language than did Evangeline Parish. In considering the question of why Pointe Coupee residents should be more advanced in assimilation, it is thought that location of much of the parish in the metropolitan shade of Baton Rouge was a major factor serving to reduce isolation and stimulate change.

The composition of the survey areas in Pointe Coupee Parish in terms of the French-speaking ability of the parents of present day married household heads and wives is shown in Table 2.

Consistently in each area the percentage of wives with French-speaking parental background was higher than that of husbands. But, on a combined husband-wife basis, the area labeled as French seems correctly identified for the parental generation with about two-thirds of the spouses coming from homes in which both parents spoke French. However the "Mixed" and "English" areas were remarkably alike in parental French language distribution, and both would have been more correctly

TABLE 2.—Percentage Distribution of Husbands and Wives by Number of Parents Who Could Speak French, Pointe Coupee Parish Sample Areas

Spouse and type of sample area	Total	Both parents	One parent	Neither parent
Husbands				
French area	100	61	2	37
Mixed area	100	26	9	66
English area	100	27	8	66
Wives				
French area	100	71	0	29
Mixed area	100	38	13	48
English area	100	39	11	50

termed "Mixed". In accordance with this finding, the area tables and analyses which follow include just two area classes for Pointe Coupee Parish: French and Mixed. In Evangeline Parish there was relatively minor difference in the language status of married couples and their parents, indicating a slower pace and earlier stage of assmilation.

Present Language Used, by Childhood Language Background

In addition to asking about the language or languages spoken in early childhood, information was obtained for persons of French or bilingual background on the frequency with which French is still spoken at home (Table 3).

The answers to these questions showed an overall French retention rate of 68 percent as the predominant language of the home for household heads. That is, 68 percent of the heads who had French as their childhood language or who learned it along with English as children continued to use it most always or more than English in the home as adults. The highest rate of retention was in the French area of Evangeline Parish, where it reached 85 percent. In the Mixed and English areas of this parish the retention rates were 57 and 63 percent, indicating lowered retention within the same county where the neighborhood was

TABLE 3.—Childhood Language of Household Heads of French or Bilingual Background and Present Language Used at Home, by Sample Area

		Childhood language		Language now used most at home		
Sample area	Total	French	English-French	French	English	Percent retaining French
Pointe Coupee	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	Pct.
French	36	19	17	21	15	58
Mixed	30	13	17	6	24	20
Evangeline						
French	151	137	14	129	22	85
Mixed	49	48	1	28	21	57
English	35	26	9	22	13	63
Total	301	243	58	206	95	68

not homogeneously French. Retention rates in Pointe Coupee are based on much smaller numbers, reflecting the fact that many of the present adult generation did not learn French in the home. The figures, such as they are, show most retention in the French area, but show lower levels of retention generally than in Evangeline. This is consistent with the more advanced assimilation in Pointe Coupee.

As might be expected, the retained use of French was most common among persons who had learned only French as their childhood tongue, whereas disuse was most likely to occur among those who were bilingual as children (Table 4). Among those who had been bilingual children, 46 percent were using French seldom or never in the home as household heads, and only 34 percent more than English. By contrast, of the heads who had only learned French as children, 75 percent continued to use it more than English in the home (56 percent always or most always) and only 14 percent seldom or never spoke it.

TABLE 4.—Frequency of French Usage at Home by Whether or not Bilingual in Childhood, for Household Heads who Learned French as Children

Present French usage at home	Learned French only as a child	Learned French and English as a child
Total		
Number	243	58
Percent	100	100
French always or most always	56	13
French more than English	19	21
French less than English	12	20
French seldom or never	14	46

Racial Composition of the Sample Population

Both white and Negro households were interviewed. Negro households made up 29 percent of all sample households in Pointe Coupee Parish, but only 14 percent of those in Evangeline Parish, where there are fewer Negroes in the total population. Within each parish there was approximately the same proportion of Negroes in the population in each of the sample areas. Although Negro families, like white families, varied in their language use, they were more frequently non-French than was true of the whites. In the combined samples, Negro households made up 27 percent of all those with non-French household heads, 16 percent of those having French background but using English, and 12 percent of those where French is still the major language of the head.

Age Distribution of the Sample Population

The median age of heads of households ranged from 45.6 years in the French area of Evangeline to 53.2 years in the mixed areas of Pointe Coupee (Table 5). The differences between the areas were particularly reflected in the proportions of household heads at or over 60 years old. Those who had reached age 60 numbered only 15 percent in the French

TABLE 5.—Age of Household Heads, by Sample Area

Sample area	Median age (years)	Distribution by age (percent)			
		Total	Under 40 years	40-59 years	60 years and over
Pointe Coupee					
French area	49.1	100	18	56	26
Mixed area	53.2	100	23	40	37
Evangeline					
French area	45.6	100	35	50	15
Mixed area	49.5	100	25	44	31
English area	50.7	100	18	53	29

area of Evangeline, compared with 37 percent in the mixed areas of Pointe Coupee.

The full explanation for this wide variation is difficult to find. It can be said, in the case of Evangeline Parish, that the French area lies in a zone of level, dark prairie soils well-suited to the persistence of farming. As a consequence, the French area has had more opportunities for its younger population.

Household Size

The average size of the household interviewed was near the state norm. The number of persons per household ranged from a low of 3.6 in the French area of Pointe Coupee to 4.0 in the French area of Evangeline. Households of the English and Mixed sample areas were intermediate in size.[7]

Households in which the head spoke French less than English were larger (4.3 persons) than those where the heads used French mostly (3.7) or of English mother tongue (3.7) (Table 6). This fact can be

TABLE 6.—Size of Household, by Language Background and Use of Household Heads

Persons in the household	Language use					
	French more than English		French less than English		English only	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Total	226	100	89	100	333	100
1 person	5	2	1	1	30	9
2	68	30	20	22	101	30
3	53	23	18	20	50	15
4	29	13	14	16	48	14
5	33	15	10	11	41	12
6	18	8	16	18	27	8
7 or more	20	9	10	11	36	11
Ave. persons per household	3.7		4.3		3.7	

[7]In 1960, the average rural household size in all of Evangeline Parish was 3.9 persons; in Pointe Coupee, 4.0; and in the state of Louisiana, 3.9. Computed from *United States Census of Population: 1960, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Louisiana.*

attributed largely to the relatively young age of those who have switched from French to English. Over two-thirds of the latter had children at home, particularly young children. Also, few of this group were old enough to be widowed.

In contrast, only half of the households where the head was of English background had children at home. Nine percent of these households consisted on one person living alone. Here, it is interesting to note that in 27 out of 30 English background cases where the household consisted of a person living alone, this person was a woman. It is also noteworthy that among the French languages only 5 heads lived alone (2 percent). There is a suggestion in these findings that widowed non-French more commonly live alone as compared with the widowed French users. Such a pattern would be in keeping with the familistic values that the Louisiana French are popularly considered to hold.

Employment and Occupation of the Sample Population

Heads of households usually are expected to be employed, unless they are elderly or disabled. Except in the French area of Evangeline, where 88 percent of the heads of households were working, the proportion of household heads employed in the sample areas ranged from 67 to 72 percent (Table 7). In the households where the head was not employed, they were retired or (less frequently) disabled, on relief, or unable to find a job. Those who said they wanted work but could not find it available made up only 2 percent of all heads. The fact that there was a rather low level of labor force participation of household heads, except in the French area of Evangeline, is evident by comparison with data for the United States as a whole. The 1960 Census showed that 80 percent of all household heads in the nation were employed. The high participation rate in the French area of Evangeline was surely connected with the low proportion of older heads in that area.

With the exception of the English area of Evangeline Parish, farming was the most common occupation of household heads in all areas. How-

TABLE 7.—Employment and Occupation Status of Household Heads, by Sample Area

Sample area	Labor force status			Major occupation of employed		
	Working	Not working	Total	Farm operator	Blue collar*	White collar#
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Pointe Coupee						
French area	68	32	100	42	33	24
Mixed area	72	28	100	37	42	21
Evangeline						
French area	88	12	100	67	22	11
Mixed area	68	32	100	43	52	5
English area	67	33	100	23	69	8

*Laborers, operators, craftsmen, service workers.
#Clerical, sales, professionals, proprietors, officials and managers.

ever, in Evangeline Parish, farming was very definitely associated with Frenchness. It may be seen in Table 7 that 67 percent of the employed heads in the French area of this parish were farmers, but only 43 percent of the household heads in the Mixed area and 23 percent of those in the English area were farmers. The English area heads of households in both parishes were more likely to hold nonfarm laboring jobs, for example in construction work. The low proportion of nonfarmers in the Evangeline French area occurs despite the fact that most of the French area is closer than other sample areas to the county seat, Ville Platte (7,500 population), where the largest accessible number of nonfarming jobs is located.

Income of Sample Population

The level of net family income received was low in all sample areas. In fact, only in the Mixed areas of Pointe Coupee Parish did as many as half of all respondents report receiving $1,500 or more in 1959 (Table 8). In all other areas less than 40 percent of the households received as much as $1,500. (Respondents were not asked their exact income, but indicated on a printed card the class interval within which their income fell. Less than $1,500 was the lowest income category used.) In the 1960 Census of Population, the medium income reported for all rural families and unrelated individuals was $1,882 in Pointe Coupee Parish and $1,736 in Evangeline Parish.

The authors have no evidence to suggest that the relative accuracy of income reporting was less in the French-language households than in the non-French households. However, one does not have to remain long in a South Louisiana parish to hear tales from the French themselves of the saving, thrifty nature of French farmers and of their reputation for keeping sizeable sums of cash at home. From this one might anticipate some reluctance by the French to state their annual income level to an interviewer. However, for only three of the more than 200 French language household heads was an income estimate not obtained. This represented a much lower rate of nonresponse than is found in the 1960 Census of Population for the United States as a whole. It does not seem likely that income was deliberately understated, inasmuch as the modal

TABLE 8.—Distribution of Households by Income in 1959, by Sample Area

Sample area	Total		Households by income				
			Under $1,500	$1,500-2,999	$3,000-4,999	$5,000 and over	No answer
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Pointe Coupee							
French area	66	100	62	15	12	11	—
Mixed area	174	100	47	14	20	18	1
Evangeline							
French area	159	100	62	23	7	7	1
Mixed area	183	100	60	24	10	5	1
English area	66	100	64	14	18	5	—

values reported were at such an undesirably low level for a family to admit to, even in a rural area lacking in economic growth. In short, the authors are convinced that the differences in income reported by the three groups of household heads are valid and not due to differences in reporting accuracy. It is possible that the levels of income are somewhat understated as compared with those reported in the Census of Population, because of the greater probing that is used in obtaining income data in the census.

The reported money income in predominantly French-speaking households was distinctly lower than that of the predominantly or solely English-speaking households (Table 9). Nearly seven-tenths of the French-speaking households reported less than $1,500 income in the previous year, compared with 56 percent of the English-only households. The predominantly English-speaking households of French background had the smallest proportion, receiving less than $1,500 (38 percent).

The poorer income position of the French-speaking households was observed despite the considerably higher number of Negro families among the English group. Negro households in all three groups reported exceptionally low incomes. Only one-eighth of them had as much as $1,500.

The low overall income rank of the French heads of households cannot be explained by the predominance of farmers among them. In

TABLE 9.—Family Income, by Race and by Language Background and Use of Head Of Household

Race and income	Total		Language background and use					
			French				English only	
			Use French		Use English			
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Both races								
Total	648	100	226	100	89	100	333	100
Under $1,500	375	58	156	69	34	38	185	56
$1,500-2,999	124	19	44	19	25	28	55	17
3,000-4,999	83	13	17	8	14	16	52	16
5,000 and over	61	9	6	3	16	18	39	12
Unknown	5	1	3	1	0	—	2	1
White								
Total	518	100	200	100	75	100	243	100
Under $1,500	261	50	133	67	21	28	107	44
$1,500-2,999	113	22	41	21	25	33	47	19
3,000-4,999	80	15	17	8	13	17	50	21
5,000 and over	60	12	6	3	16	21	38	16
Unknown	4	1	3	1	0	—	1	—
Negro								
Total	130	100	26	100	14	100	90	100
Under $1,500	114	88	23	88	13	93	78	87
$1,500 and over	15	12	3	12	1	7	11	12
Unknown	1	—	0	—	0	—	1	1

all three language usuage groups — French, mostly English, and English — farmers had lower average incomes than nonfarmers, but a much higher proportion of French-speaking farmers than of other farmers reported very low incomes — of less than $1,500. Of the French farmers, 75 percent were in this group compared with 50 percent of the non-French (Table 10). Similarly, among respondents in other occupations, it was the French who had the lowest income. The median income of French employed household heads, other than farmers, was apparently not more than two-thirds as high as that of the non-French household heads. The number of employed nonfarmer household heads of predominantly English usage was small but their income was fully equal to that of the non-French.

Among workers other than farmers, the difference between the French speakers and the non-French in income was not the result of a particularly large concentration of household heads with very low income among the French. As was noted, the non-French group include a sizeable number of Negro household heads with very low income. The principal difference was the near absence among the French of household heads earning $5,000 or more. There were 40 employed household heads in the sample doing nonfarm-operator work who earned over $5,000, but only one of these had French as his major household language.

TABLE 10.—Family Income and Occupation of Household Head, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Occupation and income	Total		Language background and use					
			French				English only	
			Use French		Use English			
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Total employed	453	100	166	100	73	100	214	100
Under $1,500 income	214	47	106	64	22	30	86	40
$1,500-2,999	105	23	38	23	24	33	43	20
3,000-4,999	74	16	16	10	11	15	47	22
5,000 and over	60	13	6	4	16	21	38	18
Farm operators	190		106	100	24	100	60	100
Under $1,500 income	126	66	80	75	16	67	30	50
$1,500-2,999	30	16	16	15	3	12	11	18
3,000-4,999	14	7	5	5	1	4	8	13
5,000 and over	20	11	5	5	4	17	11	18
Other known occupations	257	100	60	100	48	100	149	100
Under $1,500	83	32	26	43	5	10	52	35
$1,500-2,999	74	29	22	37	21	44	31	21
3,000-4,999	60	23	11	18	10	21	39	26
5,000 and over	40	16	1	2	12	25	27	18
Occupation unknown	6		0		1		5	
Total								

The contrast in income between the French household heads who retain the use of French at home and those who have switched predominantly to English is clear and substantial. The entire employed group who have changed to English (farmers and nonfarmers combined) had a median income of about $2,400, which is apparently about $1,000 more than the median income recieved by the French speakers. An hypothesis relating to assimilation may be derived from this finding as follows: Persistent use of English is an advantage in obtaining better paid jobs, probably in part because it reflects a home environment that is generally advanced in its attitudes towards the methods and goals of the larger national (non-French) society. Whatever may be the cause and whatever the effect, the household heads who have not adopted English as their major home language have to a disproportionate extent failed to earn a level of income in later life equal to that of their contemporaries who do use English or who were not of French ancestry. Early knowledge of English may also be a factor leading to economic success.

Education of Heads of Households in the Sample Populations

Education, like income, is a characteristic in which the survey parishes ranked low in comparison with national and regional norms. The median years of school completed by rural residents 25 years old and over was 5.7 years in Evangeline Parish and 5.8 years in Pointe Coupee Parish. This educational attainment may be compared with a median of 9.2 years for the U.S. rural population in 1960 and 8.4 years for the rural South. In every survey area at least a third of the heads of households had completed less than five grades of schooling. Only in the "Mixed" sample areas of Pointe Coupee Parish were as many as 15 percent of the heads of households high school graduates.

When household heads were classified by their language usage, some significant differences in level of education became evident. The heads from non-French households of English-language background averaged 7.0 years of school, those of French background but using English averaged 7.6 years of school, whereas those whose major language in the home is French averaged only 5.2 years of schooling (Table 11). Thus, the household heads using French are the most poorly educated, but those who have shifted from French to English have the highest educational attainment, rather than being intermediate between the French and non-French.

The extent of differences between the three language-background and usage groups is partly determined by age composition. Within any American population group the formal education of young adults is much higher than that of older people, and the three language groups studied are not alike in age structure. The non-French group has a relatively high proportion of household heads under 40 years old. The French-speaking household heads are intermediate in age composition.

Because the non-French heads are weighted with a greater number

TABLE 11.—Education of Household Heads, by Age and Language Background and Use

Age and education	Total		Language background and use					
			French				English only	
			Use French		Use English			
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Under 40 years								
Total	165	100	57	100	30	100	78	100
None	7	4	5	19	1	3	1	1
1-4 years	28	17	18	32	1	3	9	12
5-6 years	17	10	7	12	5	17	5	6
7-8 years	35	21	12	21	2	7	21	27
H.S. 1-3 years	44	27	11	19	11	37	22	28
H.S. 4 years	22	13	3	5	8	27	11	14
College, 1 year or more	11	7	1	2	2	7	8	10
No answer	1	1	0	—	0	—	1	1
Median years of school completed	8.7		6.6		10.6		9.3	
40-59 years								
Total	301	100	121	100	45	100	135	100
No education	31	10	23	19	1	2	7	5
Elementary, 1-4	76	25	32	26	15	33	29	21
5-6	58	19	25	21	7	16	26	19
7-8	57	19	25	21	16	36	16	12
High school, 1-3	46	15	7	6	3	7	36	27
High School, 4	19	6	5	4	2	4	12	9
College, 1 or more	13	4	4	3	1	2	8	6
No answer	1	—	0	—	0	—	1	1
Median years of school completed	6.5		5.4		6.9		7.6	
60 years and over								
Total	180	100	47	100	47	100	119	100
No education	53	29	17	36	4	29	32	27
Elementary, 1,4	55	31	12	26	2	14	41	34
5-6	23	12	9	19	1	7	13	11
7-8	28	16	6	13	6	43	16	13
High school, 1-3	8	4	2	4	0	—	6	5
4	2	1	0	—	0	—	2	2
College, 1 or more	8	4	0	—	1	7	7	6
No answer	3	2	1	2	0	—	2	2
Median years of school completed	3.6		3.0		7.0		3.6	

of older people than are the French users, the difference in median schooling between these two age groups is larger within certain age groups than the overall totals would suggest. Notice that among heads 40-59 years of age the non-French have a median educational attainment 2.1 years higher than the French-users and that among heads under 40 years old the median for the non-French is 2.7 years higher. Thus,

at least among the households residing in the survey areas, the educational gap between French-speakers and non-French that existed among persons educated mostly before 1930 widened rather than narrowed for those who went to school in more recent years. Particularly striking is the shortage of high school-trained people among the French. Of the heads under 40 years old, only a fourth of the French-language users had attended one or more years of high school, compared with one-half of the non-French, and seven-tenths of those changing from French to English use.

This finding is significant in terms of the assimilation process. The persistence of French language apparently retards education, which is perhaps, the fastest road to complete acculturation.

Analysis of the household heads who learned French but now speak English at home is more tentative because there are fewer of them. The slight overall superiority in education of these heads over the non-French heads may be attributed to the presence of many elderly individuals among the non-French. When the English users of French origin and non-French household heads are compared for persons under 60 years of age, the median education of the non-French persons is higher (8.5 years as compared with 7.5 years). At all ages, those individuals who have changed to English show higher average educational attainment than those who use French mostly.

Another factor in addition to age which is related to the educational attainment of the three language-background and use groups is racial composition. Most of the Negro household heads in the survey had very little formal schooling. Their median education was only 2.3 years, compared with the 7.3 years of whites (Table 12). One-third of the Negroes had not completed even one year of schooling. But, although Negro households were distributed rather equally in the three types of communities sampled, they were not distributed proportionately among the language-background groups. Because nearly 70 percent of the Negro household heads had learned only English as children, compared with slightly less than half of the white household heads, the exceptionally low education of the Negro heads affects the totals for the non-French population more than those of the other groups. Among the white sample population, average education was not significantly different between the non-French and the English-speakers of French origin (8.3 years vs. 7.8 years). The white French-speaking heads of households were the lowest group in educational attainment, having completed an average of only 5.8 years.

The educational level of farmers in the United States is generally lower than that of nonfarm workers, and the persons interviewed for this study did not prove to be exceptions. Household heads who were farm operators averaged two years less schooling than did heads employed at other jobs. This difference between farmers and other workers is found in all three language-background groups in both parishes. The high proportion of farmers among the French partly explains

TABLE 12.—Education of Household Heads, by Race and by Language Background And Use

Education of heads	Total		Language background and use: French — Use French		French — Use English		English only	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Years of school completed								
Total White & Negro	648	100	226	100	89	100	333	100
None	92	14	46	20	6	7	40	12
1-4 years	159	25	62	27	18	20	79	24
5-6	98	15	41	18	13	15	44	13
7-8	120	18	43	19	24	27	53	16
H.S. 1-3	98	15	20	9	14	16	64	19
H.S. 4	43	7	8	4	10	11	25	8
College, 1 year or more	32	5	5	2	4	4	23	7
No answer	6	1	1	1	—	—	5	1
Median years completed	6.5		5.2		7.6		7.0	
White								
Total	518	100	200	100	75	100	243	100
None	46	9	33	17	0	—	13	5
1-4 years	102	20	51	26	12	16	39	16
5-6	91	17	41	20	13	17	37	15
7-8	110	21	41	20	22	30	47	19
H.S. 1-3	94	18	20	10	14	19	60	25
H.S. 4	41	8	8	4	10	13	23	10
College, 1 year or more	30	6	5	2	4	5	21	9
No answer	4	1	1	1	—	—	3	1
Median years completed	7.3		5.8		7.8		8.3	
Negro								
Total	130	100	26	100	14	100	90	100
None	46	35	13	50	6	43	27	30
1-4 years	57	44	11	42	6	43	40	45
5-8	17	13	2	8	2	14	13	14
H.S., 1 year or more	8	6	—	—	—	—	8	9
No answer	2	2	—	—	—	—	2	2
Median years completed	2.3		1.0		1.7		2.7	

the overall low level of education among the French heads. However, this factor is by no means a complete explanation of the French and English differences, for, as is shown in Table 13, the English were clearly better educated than the French, both among farmers and among workers in other occupations.

TABLE 13.—Education and Occupation of Household Heads, by Language Background And Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Occupation and education	Total		Language background and use					
			French				English only	
			Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Farm operators								
Total	193	100	109	100	24	100	60	100
0-4 years	82	42	50	46	12	50	20	34
5-8	65	34	46	42	5	21	14	24
9-12	40	21	12	11	7	29	21	34
13 years and over	4	2	1	1	..	..	3	4
No answer	2	1	..	..	..	..	2	3
Median years of school completed	5.8		5.4		5.0		7.6	
All other employed household heads								
Total	263	100	60	100	49	100	154	100
0-4 years	62	23	20	33	9	18	33	22
5-8	92	35	23	39	21	43	48	31
9-12	86	33	14	23	16	33	56	36
13 years and over	21	8	3	5	3	6	15	10
No answer	2	1	..	..	..	..	2	1
Median years of school completed	8.0		6.7		8.0		8.6	

Religious Affiliation

Religion continues to be a factor that rather clearly demarcates the people of French background from those of non-French origin in Evangeline and Pointe Coupee parishes. The French are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic and the non-French are predominantly Protestant (plus a few Mormons and people of Jewish faith). In the French areas of Evangeline 89 percent of the heads of households were Catholic, whereas in the non-French communities of the same parish only 26 percent were Catholic. There was somewhat less religious homogeneity of communities in Pointe Coupee. Of the non-Catholics in the sample, two-thirds were Baptist. Indeed, Baptists and Catholics together accounted for 84 percent of all household heads in the survey areas.

The heads of households with French as the language of the home were 88 percent Catholic. Those of French background who use English at home were 74 percent Catholic (Table 14). The group who learned only English as children includes a sizeable Catholic minority (23 percent) but many of this minority appear to be persons of French ancestry whose parents did not teach them French. In the acculturation process, the Roman Catholic religion of the French has generally persisted even where the French language has not. The "leakage" from either of the two major religious groups to the other appears to have been minor.

Only 6 household heads out of 648 failed to claim a religious pref-

TABLE 14.—Religious Preference of Household Heads, by Language Background and Use

Religious preference	Total		Language background					
			French				English only	
			Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Total	648	100	226	100	89	100	333	100
Roman Catholic	343	53	200	88	66	74	77	23
Baptist	203	31	23	10	15	17	165	50
Methodist	28	4	1	..	3	3	24	7
Other	68	10	0	..	4	4	64	19
No response	6	1	2	1	1	1	3	1

erence, and over 90 percent were church members. From this it may be seen there was nearly complete formal adherence to organized religion by both language groups.

Respondents in the predominantly Catholic areas reported somewhat greater frequency of church attendance than did those in the Protestant areas, a finding similar to conditions reported for the United States as a whole in other studies.[8]

Part V. French and Non-French Differences In Attitudes and Opinions

A major purpose of this study was to test the degree to which the French and English elements in South Louisiana differed in their attitudes and opinions. In order to implement this objective, each respondent was asked to give his opinion on certain more or less value-laden topics and questions relevant to problems of economic and community development. The responses were classified according to the language background and use of the respondents wherever they lived, rather than according to sample areas.

Attitude Toward Farming as a Way to Make a Living

Respondents from all language groups generally were favorable toward farming as an occupation. Those interviewees from families classified as French speakers were more likely to hold a strongly favorable view. As may be seen in Table 15, 22 percent of the respondents from French-speaking husband-wife families as compared with 17 percent of those from non-French families expressed strongly favorable attitudes toward farming as an occupation or as a way of making a living. Some 33 percent of the former group expressed attitudes which could be classified as unfavorable or indifferent. By comparison, 39 percent

[8]For example, see "A Comparison of Major United States Religious Groups" by Bernard Lazerwitz, in *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, September 1961, pp. 568-579.

TABLE 15.—Respondents' Attitude Toward Farming as an Occupation, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Attitude statement	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Strongly favorable	46	22	17	20	46	17
Favorable	92	45	37	43	123	44
No special feeling	10	5	10	12	29	10
Unfavorable	57	28	22	25	80	29
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

of the non-French group did not favor farming as an occupation or said they did not have a special feeling about the matter. The responses of informants from the English-speaking group of French-language origin tended to fall in an intermediate position between that of the French and non-French.

Hypothetically, attitudes toward farming as an occupation would be expected to show a relation to education, age, and income as well as ethnic background. However, there was no significant difference within the language background groups in attitude toward farming when respondents were classed by these variables. The authors are inclined to believe that little formal difference in attitude actually exists. The large difference in the percent of French and English people engaged in farming in Evangeline Parish (Table 7) may be the result of differences in the suitability of the various sections of the parish for modern-day agriculture rather than differences in attitude toward farming.

Attitudes Toward Living in Rural Areas

It is to be expected that most adults residing in rural areas will express a favorable attitude toward residence outside of urban centers. Therefore, it is not surprising that a majority of respondents from all three sample groups expressed a strongly favorable view towards living in the country. Most persons not giving a strongly favorable opinion

TABLE 16.—Informants' Attitude Toward Living in a Rural Area, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Attitude statement	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Strongly favorable	150	73	69	80	202	73
Favorable	50	24	16	19	67	24
Unfavorable or no special feeling	5	3	1	1	9	3
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

expressed a "favorable" view, that they believed that rural living had advantages over city living although not to an exceptional degree. Very few – less than three percent of the total – expressed opinions which were negative or indifferent on this question. The attitude differences between the language groups were so slight as to not be statistically significant (Table 16).

Attitudes Concerning the Amount of Education Needed by Young People Today

Respondents were asked to indicate the amount of education that they believed a boy should have to become a successful farmer and the amount needed for non-farm work (Table 17). Among all three language-background groups the most frequent answer given was 4 years of high school for farming and 4 years of college for nonfarm work. These levels are far higher than the average education that the present adult population has, either farm or nonfarm, and clearly indicate that there is a widely felt need for a better education in these communities. Substantial differences in ideas about education still persist between the groups, however. For example, one-fourth of the people who retain French as the language of the home declared that a boy needs less than 5 years of elementary school to be a successful farmer. This is a statement that would appall vocational agriculture teachers familiar with the complex nature of modern farming. The proportion of the two English-speaking respondent groups giving such a low estimate

TABLE 17.–Respondent's Opinion Concerning Amount of Education Required by a Boy to be Successful at Work, by Childhood Language Background and Use of Household Head

Education needed to become successful	Total		Language background and use					
			French				English only	
			Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Education needed to be a farmer								
Total	648	100	226	100	89	100	333	100
Less than 5 years	95	15	55	24	9	10	31	9
5-11	82	13	31	14	16	18	35	10
12 years	279	43	91	40	43	48	145	44
More than 12 years	127	19	23	10	15	17	89	27
Don't know	65	10	26	12	6	7	33	10
Education needed for nonfarm work								
Total	648	100	226	100	89	100	333	100
Less than 5 years	3	1	0	..	0	..	3	1
5-11	35	5	13	6	7	8	15	5
12 years	143	22	62	27	14	16	67	20
More than 12 years	417	64	125	55	64	72	228	68
Don't know or other	50	8	26	12	4	4	20	6

of education needed was only about 10 percent. At the other end of the scale, a fourth of the non-French and a sixth of the French who use English at home thought some college education was necessary for farming, but only a tenth of the French speakers held this view. For nonfarm work, 49 percent of the French speakers considered a college degree necessary, whereas 63 percent of the non-French and 70 percent of the English users of French background thought so.

In short, although all groups have accepted educational goals for their children far higher than the levels attained by the present adult generations, there is still a significant lag in the attitudes of many in the French-language group as compared with the English-language groups. It would appear that an abnormally high proportion of children in French-language families are still growing up in homes where there is less recognition of the economic value of an education than is true in the larger society, as represented by the English speaking families.

Opinion on Whether or not a Man of French-Speaking Background is Handicapped in Looking for a Job Away from the Area, Where French is Not Spoken

Some local observers felt that French-speaking residents are sometimes hesitant about moving away from their communities because of English-language difficulties, close orientation to their immediate family and neighborhood, and a general sense of uncertainty about coping with the non-French industrial society. Such reticence would slow down assimilation, of course.

In this connection, it is pertinent to note that the survey interviewers considered that 184 respondents spoke English with a "decided" French accent. Another 122 were judged to speak with a "slight" French accent.[9]

It was thus thought worthwhile to inquire whether the French themselves were conscious of barriers to obtaining work in an outside area. The question asked was, "In your opinion is a young man with a French-speaking background handicapped in looking for a job away from this area, where French is not spoken?" The responses to the query indicate that not many of the French respondents felt handicapped in looking for work elsewhere. Nor did the non-French of the sample communities perceive that a young man of French-speaking background would be handicapped (Table 18). Thus language and ethnic affiliation barriers to success in other areas do not seem to loom large in the minds of the population. Of the 12 percent minority who did not agree with this position, about half said that difficulty in communicating in English

[9]In 17 additional cases the respondents did not speak in English at any time during the interview and a judgment as to accent could not be made. About two-thirds of the cases with a decided accent were in Evangeline Parish, but about three-fifths of the cases with a slight accent were in Pointe Coupee Parish—apparently another indication of the somewhat more advanced state of assimilation of the French in Pointe Coupee.

TABLE 18.—Respondents' Opinion Regarding Whether or Not a French Language Background is a Handicap in Looking for a Job Outside the Parish, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Attitude Statement	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Yes	24	12	13	15	28	10
No and don't know	181	88	73	85	250	90
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

was a handicap to obtaining jobs elsewhere. No other reasons were commonly cited. Only four respondents thought that there was any discrimination against the French on the part of outside employers. The same question was also asked regarding the existence of a handicap to a young man of French-speaking background in obtaining a job within the survey parishes. Only 5 percent of the respondents in either parish thought such a handicap existed.

Opinion Regarding Whether or Not the Home Parish Afforded An Opportunity to "Make A Good Living"

It may be assumed that the outlook on life of a particular people is partly manifest in how satisfied they are with their locale. One test of this satisfaction is whether or not they feel there is ample economic opportunity to provide themselves and their families with a reasonably good living in their home area. In this connection, all interviewees were asked if they thought their particular parish afforded the average person this possibility. The French-speaking respondents in the sample group answered in the affirmative significantly more often than the non-French, even though their average level of income is lower (Table 19). So did the English-using respondents of French-language background. Half or more in all groups indicated that a person could make a "good" living in their parish, despite the low levels of income that

TABLE 19.—Respondents' Attitude Toward their Parish as a Place in which to Make a Good Living, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Attitude Statement*	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Good	119	58	57	66	137	49
Not good	74	36	22	26	119	43
No opinion and no answer	12	6	7	8	22	8
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

*Differences between the language background and use groups is statistically significant at the .01 level, as measured by the Chi Square test.

actually prevail compared with national income standards. An important point is that the French and the bilingual group demonstrated a greater satisfaction with their home situation at all levels of education and income. There was no significant difference in the overall proportion of favorable responses between the two sample parishes. The residents of the English area in Evangeline Parish were the least sanguine about their parish as a place of economic opportunity (42 percent).

Opinion as to Whether or Not French-Speaking and Non-French Speaking People Get Along Well Together

One may expect that a group wishing to bring about or hasten assimilation would tend to minimize the existence of intergroup conflict and emphasize harmony. This proved to be the case when respondents in the survey were asked how well French- and English-speaking people in the parish got along with one another. A substantial majority of them said that the groups got along together "very well," and almost all of the remainder said that relationships were "all right." Thus, there was a wide area of consensus on this question. However, it was noticeable that a significantly larger proportion of persons who predominantly speak French at home believed that the two groups got along very well together (78 percent) than was true of the persons of English background only (65 percent), or the group that had once spoken French but shifted to English (66 per ent). The English speakers more frequently had a qualified view of the situation.

In commenting on the data in Table 20, one might suggest that cultural characteristics relating to friendliness on the part of the French may explain some of the variation in responses. Respondents were asked who they thought were more friendly, the French or non-French. Somewhat more than half in each parish (57 percent combined) said that there was no difference in the friendliness of the groups. But, in every sample area of the two parishes, those who thought there was a difference in this attribute considered the French to be more friendly.

TABLE 20.—Respondents' Opinion on Degree to Which French and English-Speaking People Get Along with One Another, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Attitude Statement*	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Very well	159	78	57	66	180	65
All right	43	21	29	34	92	33
Not very well or don't know	3	1	..	..	6	2
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

*Difference between the language background and use groups is statistically significant at the .05 level, as measured by the Chi Square test.

There was some ethnocentric pattern evident. In the purest French area in Evangeline Parish, 48 percent thought the French to be more friendly and only 5 percent thought the English were. At the other extreme, in the purest English area the proportion regarding the French as more friendly was just 24 percent, but this proportion was far higher than the 9 percent who thought the English to be more friendly. In all survey areas combined, the judgement was French 35 percent and English 8 percent. This clear concensus that the French are as friendly or even more friendly than the population of English background would seem to be an asset to the French in achieving acceptance and assimilation in the larger English-dominated society.

Feelings About Moving to a Strange Community to Better Their Income

As a means of assessing attitudes and values that might affect mobility, respondents in husband-wife households were asked if they would consider moving to a strange community if they could better their income by half again. In response to this question, close to one-fourth (24 percent) of the French-speaking respondents said they would move without question. Only 14 percent of the non-French group and 12 percent of the English-speakers of French background gave an unqualified affirmative answer. However, relatively fewer French-speaking informants (34 percent) than non-French (41 percent) or English-speaking French (48 percent) said they would consider such a move seriously but not move without question. Approximately the same relative number (about two-fifths) of all three groups said they would not consider moving (Table 21).

The larger percentage of French-speakers saying they would move without question is difficult to reconcile to the popular notion that the French are more provincial in outlook. This pattern of responses would seem to indicate a somewhat greater economic motivation on the part of the French. It was found at all age groups. The finding again suggests that there is a willingness to become assimilated. Unpublished detail shows that the more conservative answers of the English-speaking

TABLE 21.—Respondents' Attitude toward Moving to a Strange Community for Higher Income, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Attitude statement*	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Move without question	49	24	10	12	39	14
Consider seriously	69	34	41	48	115	41
Not consider moving	82	40	32	37	107	39
Don't know	5	2	3	3	17	6
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

French were not a reflection of their considerably higher income distribution.

Acquaintance of Respondent with Agricultural Extension Agent

One question of concern to planners of agricultural or community development programs is whether or not members of ethnic groups will work through an agency representative. To obtain some insight into this matter, respondents were asked whether they knew personally their Parish Agricultural Extension Agent. The results are shown in Table 22.

Significantly, far more of the French respondents were found to be personally acquainted with the agents. In evaluating this fact two circumstances must be considered. First, more of the French group were farmers, and would have an occasion to consult an agricultural agent. Second, senior agents in both parishes were French Louisianians who spoke French fluently and could thus establish rapport with French families. Nevertheless it is important to note that the French have been widely contacted. There is a clue to how contacts and program participation may be obtained by the employment of local French-speaking persons as demonstrated in the data following on preferences in the background of public officials with whom people prefer to deal.

TABLE 22.—Acquaintance of Respondent with Agricultural Extension Agent, by Language Background and Use of Head in Husband-Wife Households

Characteristic*	Language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
Acquainted	139	68	44	51	118	42
Not acquainted	66	32	42	49	160	58
Total	205	100	86	100	278	100

*Differences between the language background and use groups are statistically significant at the .01 level, as measured by the Chi Square test.

Public Official with whom Respondent Would Feel More at Ease

One area in which the attitude of French-language respondents was in sharp contrast to that of English-speaking respondents was the matter of preference in dealing with public officials. Nearly two-thirds of the French-language respondents stated that they would feel more at ease in dealing with a public official of their background than with one of English background only. Most of the remainder had no preference (Table 23). On the other hand, only a fifth of the non-French group expressed a sense of greater ease in dealing with an official of their own background, and only a fourth of the English-speakers of French background expressed any preference (either for French or non-French officials).

Particularly striking is the comparison of the attitude of those who

TABLE 23.—Public Official with Whom Respondents Would Feel More at Ease, by Language Background and Use

Preferred background of public official	Respondents, by language background and use					
	French				English only	
	Use French		Use English			
	No.	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*	*No.*	*Pct.*
French-speaking	146	65	15	17	19	6
English	5	2	9	10	66	20
No preference	75	33	64	72	243	73
No answer	0	0	1	1	5	2
Total	226	100	89	100	333	100

still use the French language compared with the group of French ancestry who have made English their principal language. Whereas only a third of the French-language group were sufficiently comfortable with, or trusting of, English-background officials to be able to deal with them as easily as with French officials, nearly 72 percent of the more assimilated group had reached the point of having no preference in dealing with a public official of one ethnic group over another. This neutral attitude of the French who have adopted English as their major language appears to be one of the principal fruits of the assimilation process.

Part VI. Summary

The two parishes surveyed are located on the northern margin of French South Louisiana, with a majority of their inhabitants of French background. In the use of the French language, which is surely the key factor in the continuing meaningful identity of the French as a distinctive group, Pointe Coupee proved to be at least a generation ahead of Evangeline in the abandonment of French for English. Numerous adults of French background in Pointe Coupee were not taught French by their parents. In Evangeline, adults of French background who had not learned French as children were rarely encountered. Furthermore, in Evangeline the overwhelming majority of French household heads continued to use French always or most always in their homes. Residence in a section of the parish in which the population is of mixed or largely non-French origin seemed to result in some loss of use of French by persons for whom it was a childhood language.

When the study population was classified into three groups on the basis of (1) learned French – speak French at home, (2) learned French – speak English at home, and (3) learned English only, substantial differences between them were found in the important areas of education, occupation, and income.

In education, the household heads who prefer to speak French at home were found to have significantly fewer years of school on the average. Although the younger heads have more education than the older

ones, the gap between the French speakers and heads who had changed to English or were of non-French background has not narrowed. In addition, although the French-speaking heads believe their children need more education than they themselves have, a sizeable minority of these heads still have a very conservative concept of the education required for successful farming, as compared with the opinions of the other language groups. More than two-fifths of the French speakers expressing an opinion on this matter did not think attendance through high school is needed.

The general level of education in the survey areas is low by modern standards. In view of the fact that education is one of the best avenues leading to assimilation and economic equality, it may be deduced that a major reason why the French have not assimilated more quickly is their low level of formal schooling.

In Evangeline Parish, the employed heads of households in the French districts are much more likely to be farmers than are heads in the Mixed or English areas of the parish. There appeared to be no correspondence between farming and Frenchness in Pointe Coupee. The relationship in Evangeline may be simply a function of the very real difference in suitability for farming of the sections occupied by persons of French and non-French background. However, this pattern of settlement segregation may itself stem from differences in the activities and types of land preferred by the original French and English settlers.

Although the survey provides no clear picture of a preference for farming by the French, one additional piece of information (not detailed in the text) affords a relevant sidelight on the position of the French as farmers. Respondents were asked whether they thought the French or the English people made the better farmers, or whether there was no difference. In all sample areas a majority — averaging about two-thirds — saw no difference. But among the one-third who perceived a difference, five out of six viewed the French as the better farmers. The basis for this view was not investigated, but it was found to prevail not only in Evangeline, where the French clearly have the best conditions for farming, but also in Pointe Coupee where they do not appear to have such an advantage. There seems to be an association between the abandonment of French speech in the home and the choice of a non-agricultural occupation. Only a fourth of the French heads who use English at home are farmers compared with half of those who continue to speak French.

Both of the parishes in which the survey was conducted are low-income areas in comparison with the nation as a whole or with the growing sections of Louisiana. But within the parishes, the people of French origin who retain French as their major tongue are clearly the most often found in the low-income group. The great majority of them apparently have less income than any amount that might be used nationally to identify the "poverty" sector of the population. But although the populace is aware of a low general level of income, and many note the

lack of sufficient economic opportunity in their parishes, the authors believe that the majority do not for a minute think of themselves or similarly situated neighbors as being in "poverty."

The most clearly impoverished group is the Negro population, whether in French or non-French areas. Median levels of income and education among Negroes in the survey areas were extremely low, with only a small minority reporting as much as $1,500 of annual family income or more than 4 years of schooling for the household head.

Except within the Negro population, where sufficient observations are not available, there was a marked association between the acceptance of English as the principal language by persons of French background and the achievement of a higher level of family income. The authors do not suggest that one result is simply dependent on the other. The two characteristics are more likely interdependent.

Aside from language, probably the most clear cut difference between the populations of French and non-French background is in religious affiliation. The French remain preponderantly Roman Catholic, regardless of the extent to which they continue to speak French, and the population of non-French background is largely Protestant. This circumstance contributes to sustaining the French as a distinctive social element within the state or within a smaller area where they live in proximity to non-French.

The attitudes and opinions of the language groups were studied on questions deemed relevant to the persistence of the French as a distinctive group and to economic development.

Although many of the adults of French origin in Pointe Coupee were not taught French by their parents, and a number of the present parents who know French do not use it much at home or teach it to their children, a remarkably high proportion of persons of all language backgrounds and in all survey areas was found to believe that French-speaking parents should teach their children French. This was just as true in Pointe Coupee, where there has been substantial actual abandonment of French, as it was in Evangeline. A minimum of 84 percent of the respondents held this view in every area. This relative unanimity has not prevented heavy loss of the use of French in some areas. Thus for some respondents the opinion may not be more than a nostalgic ideal. On the other hand it does indicate a general sense of cultural loss when the language is abandoned. Further, the highly favorable attitude of the non-French population toward retaining the ability to speak French, reflects a satisfactory status for the language — and the authors believe an improved status. Only a small number of respondents thought that French was not learned because the children were ashamed of it or because parents did not want their children speaking "Cajun" French—which admittedly is not good French. The great majority favored the study of French in school as well as at home.

Questions related to the potential mobility of the population did not reveal any hesitancy by the French-speaking people to take advan-

tage of opportunities elsewhere. Only one-eighth of them thought that a French-speaking person was disadvantaged in seeking a job elsewhere, and the non-French agreed with this evaluation. In addition, more of the French showed an unqualified willingness to move for more income than was true of the non-French. Certainly the French have participated heavily in the actual movement from these parishes. Estimates of net migration from 1950 to 1960 reveal that 45 percent of the young people who were 10-14 years old in 1950 had left these parishes by 1960. Because the people of French origin comprise a majority of the population, such a rate could not have existed without their inclusion among the outmigrants.

Despite their greater expressed willingness to move for more income, the French speakers did more often view their home parishes as places of economic opportunity than did the non-French, an outlook that seems inconsistent (at least superficially) with their poorer actual economic status.

If there are tensions between the French and non-French ethnic groups in the survey parishes, they were not expressed in the course of the survey interviews. Most respondents thought that intergroup relations were very good, and very few considered them to be poor. Regardless of this aura of good feeling, most of the people for whom French is still the preferred household language freely asserted that they felt more at ease in dealing with a public official of French-speaking background. Thus in getting the interest and cooperation of the French in public programs, there appears to be much to gain by having French-speaking officials and workers. The Agricultural Extension Service in the survey parishes has recognized this point and its agents have achieved a wide acquaintanceship in the French community. Even entire meetings with farmers in the French sections of Evangeline have been conducted in the French language.

Implications

The study demonstrates that the process of assimilation is under way but at varying speeds. Given the fact that there have been very few immigrants of French tongue into the area for many generations and that the language has been oral and completely subordinated to English in school, perhaps it is fair to call the assimilation slow, at least in Evangeline and through the present adult generation. The relative recency in the area of such things as universal electrification of homes, good roads, education through high school — and finally television — may have played a key role in preserving the older cultural patterns. It seems quite safe to assert that the process of assimilation is speeding up.

Whether French can survive as a living language among any sizeable element of the population in view of the increased involvement of the area in general economic development, in the many programs of the Federal government, and the heightened mobility that characterizes

the population today, is questionable. Despite the stated desire of parents that the children should continue to learn French in the home, the retention of French does not seem to be compatible with rapid progress in education and income, if the experience of the families who have already abandoned French is any guide. Perhaps this is partly associated with the poor average quality of the French that is transmitted orally. Learning poor French as the mother language is a handicap in learning good English later. Bi-lingualism itself can be a cultural advantage, as evidenced by the millions of Europeans who are grammatically fluent in two or more languages. But the fact that French in Louisiana happened to survive for the most part only as a traditional spoken language lessens its survival possibilities today and reduces the modern-day usefulness and satisfaction that it could have for the population of French origin.

Regardless of what the future holds, it can be demonstrated that today there are still major differences in the resources and attitudes of the French-speaking populace as compared with the non-French or the French who have been assimilated to the English language.

It seems clear that the French will respond to programs that would represent economic and educational opportunity. Furthermore, they are not bound to their home communities, and those of a mobile age will move to other locations, given sufficient incentive.

Finally, we should like to reaffirm our belief that the presence of ethnic groups beyond those normally identified in censuses does continue to be a matter of significance in various parts of the United States. We hope that the information developed here on the French and non-French in rural Louisiana will stimulate additional research on the processes of change in the French community and on other such groups.